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SUBJECT: DAILY SUMMARY OF JAPANESE PRESS 08/25/09

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ARTICLES:

- (1) Prime Minister Aso exchanges views with new U.S. Ambassador to Japan Roos

MAINICHI ONLINE (Full)
11:10, August 25, 2009

Yasuhiko Sakaguchi

Receiving a courtesy call by John V. Roos, the new U.S. ambassador to Japan, Prime Minister Taro Aso exchanged views with him for about

15 minutes this morning. After his meeting with the Prime Minister, Ambassador Roos told the press, "We talked about how to strengthen the bilateral relationship and how to maintain it." Later, meeting with Chief Cabinet Secretary Takeo Kawamura, Ambassador Roos said, "President Obama told me that the bonds between the United States and Japan will become even more stronger."

(2) Editorial: Stay alert on North Korea's approach of dialogue

NIKKEI (Page 2) (Full)
August 25, 2009

North Korean envoys who visited Seoul to mourn the death of former South Korean President Kim Dae Jung met with South Korean President Lee Myung-bak and delivered a message from leader Kim Jong Il calling for promoting bilateral cooperation. North Korea, which has repeatedly criticized the Lee administration, seems to be turning the inter-Korean relationship in the direction of dialogue. But we must keep a strict watch on the North.

This was the first time for President Lee since he came into office to hold talks with senior North Korean officials. The details of the message from Kim Jong Il and of the meeting have not been disclosed, but both sides reportedly expressed a positive view about inter-Korean cooperation. They now stand at the threshold of improvement in strained bilateral ties.

North Korea's abrupt about-face apparently reflects a desire to sway the Lee administration and break out of the tightening international noose meant to deter its nuclear development. The international

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community, including the South Korean government, should be increasingly on the alert against the North.

President Lee reportedly reiterated his view to the North Korean envoys that there would be no progress in economic cooperation as long as the North continues its nuclear development programs. Some observers in South Korea take the view that governmental talks between the South and North may start in the near future, but we hope the Lee administration will persist with its basic stance on the nuclear issue.

With the reception of former U.S. President Bill Clinton in early August, North Korea initiated a policy of dialogue. Kim Jong Il met Clinton and released two detained American journalists. The head of the South Korean Hyundai Group traveled to North Korea and won the release of an employee detained there. Kim also promised to resume the projects that were being jointly promoted by South and North Korea.

These developments are inevitably signals sent by the North to express its hope for improvement in relations with the U.S. and South Korea. The North's approach to South Korea is intended to lure the U.S. into direct talks with North Korea.

It was North Korea that suspended the South-North cooperation projects and detained the U.S. journalists and the Hyundai employee. The aim of these signals for improvement in bilateral ties is to return the bilateral relationship to its original state. In doing this North Korea has nothing to lose.

What most interest the international community is the issue of North Korea's nuclear (development program). But the North has indicated no willingness to compromise. Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Wu Dawei, who chairs the Six-Party Talks on North Korea's nuclear issue, visited North Korea on Aug. 17-21 and urged Vice Foreign Minister Kim Gye Gwan and other North Korean officials to return to the Six-party Talks. But their reply was to put an end the Six-Party Talks for good.

Philip Goldberg, a senior U.S. diplomat in charge of coordinating the Department of State's implementation of sanctions against North Korea, is making a round of visits to four Asian countries, including Japan and South Korea. North Korea's irritation at progress in tightening the noose is evident. It is imperative for

the international community, centered on Japan, the U.S, and South Korea, to continue to pressure North Korea to abandon its nuclear development program.

(3) UC Berkeley in possession of remains of WWII Japanese war dead; California senator calls for return and apology

SANKEI (Page 8) (Full)
August 25, 2009

Michiya Matsuo, New York

It was learned that the remains of several Japanese who apparently committed suicide in Saipan, the site of fierce fighting during World War II, are being kept in the storeroom of the Museum of Anthropology of the University of California, Berkeley, one of the top universities in the United States.

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According to a local paper, the San Francisco Chronicle, three sets of skeletal remains with skulls, and various bones of additional Japanese war dead without skulls are stored in wooden containers in the museum. Tags on the vaults show that they were collected in Saipan, with an explanation that these are remains of "Japanese who committed suicide during the American invasion."

According to the university, these remains were donated by a navy doctor in 1974, and they had been kept by him privately before the donation. The doctor has since died.

Keeping the remains of the war dead in the storeroom of a museum, that is, treating them with neglect, amounts to lack of respect and dignity in treating the deceased. The office of Speaker Nancy Pelosi of the U.S. House of Representatives, whose constituency is near UC Berkeley, told the Chronicle that Pelosi "has grave concerns about this issue."

"These are so-called skeletons in the closet," the office of state Senator Gloria Romero said. "They are an affront to human dignity." The office demanded an apology to Japan and the return of the remains.

The Chronicle points out that it was not uncommon for U.S. soldiers to bring home the remains of Japanese soldiers and other war dead as souvenirs during World War II. The paper suggests that this might have violated the Geneva Conventions, which call for the protection of the war dead.

"It has not been determined that they are indeed remains of Japanese persons or whether they are soldiers or civilians," responded UC Berkeley. "We also do not have information on how they died." The university added that the Geneva Conventions are international laws pertaining to prisoners of war, so if the identity of the war dead is unknown, there is no violation of the Conventions. However, the university is taking this matter seriously and is in contact with the U.S. government and other authorities.

The Japanese embassy in the United States has also shown interest in this case. It is in contact with the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare and other Japanese government offices to gather information on this matter.

(4) Poll on general election

MAINICHI (Page 5) (Full)
August 22, 2009

Questions & Answers
(T=total; M=male; F=female)

Q: Are you going to vote in the upcoming election for the House of Representatives?

T M F
Yes 74 79 69

Probably yes 19 15 22
Probably no 2 2 3
No 1 1 1

Q: Which political party do you support?

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T M F
Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) 19 20 18
Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ or Minshuto) 34 41 27
New Komeito (NK) 5 3 6
Japanese Communist Party (JCP) 3 3 3
Social Democratic Party (SDP or Shaminto) 1 1 1
People's New Party (PNP or Kokumin Shinto) 1 1 0
Your Party (YP or Minna no To) 1 2 1
Reform Club (RC or Kaikaku Kurabu) 0 0 0
New Party Nippon (NPN or Shinto Nippon) 0 0 0
Other political parties 1 1 1
None 25 20 29

Q: Who do you think is more appropriate for prime minister, Prime Minister Aso or DPJ President Hatoyama?

T M F
Prime Minister Aso 14 14 13
DPJ President Hatoyama 30 37 23
Neither 47 42 51

Q: Which party do you think is more competent to run the government, the LDP or the DPJ?

T M F
LDP 37 38 36
DPJ 40 43 36

Q: What do you regard as most important in the general election for the House of Representatives?

T M F
Economic policy measures 27 28 26
Pension, healthcare, nursing care 29 26 32
Childcare, education 14 9 18
Decentralization 2 2 1
Administrative reform 7 9 5
A change of government 10 14 7

(Note) Figures shown in percentage, rounded off. "0" indicates that the figure was below 0.5%. "No answer" omitted.

Polling methodology: The survey was conducted jointly by the Mainichi Shimbun and Japan News Network (JNN) on Aug. 19-20 over the telephone across the nation on a computer-aided random digit sampling (RDS) basis. Answers were obtained from 77,858 voters.

(5) Poll on Aso cabinet, political parties

YOMIURI (Page 6) (Abridged)
August 22, 2009

Questions & Answers
(Figures are percentages)

Q: Do you support the Aso cabinet?

Yes 24.7
No 64.3
Other answers (O/A) 3.4
No answer (N/A) 7.6

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Q: Which political party do you support now? Pick only one.

Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) 26.9
Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ or Minshuto) 33.2
New Komeito (NK) 3.2
Japanese Communist Party (JCP) 2.8
Social Democratic Party (SDP or Shaminto) 1.2
People's New Party (PNP or Kokumin Shinto) 0.4
Your Party (YP or Minna no To) 0.6
Reform Club (RC or Kaikaku Kurabu) ---
New Party Nippon (NPN or Shinto Nippon) ---
Other political parties 0.1
None 28.2
N/A 3.4

Q: Are you interested in the general election to be held on Aug. 30 for the House of Representatives?

Very interested 61.4
Somewhat interested 28.6
Not very interested 8.7
Not interested at all 1.1
N/A 0.2

Q: Which political party's candidate are you going to vote for in the upcoming election for the House of Representatives in your single-seat constituency?

LDP 24.8
DPJ 37.7
NK 3.7
JCP 2.7
SDP 1.8
PNP 0.5
YP 1.5
RC 0.1
NPN ---
Other political parties 0.4
Independent 2.2
Undecided 20.6
N/A 4.0

Q: Which political party are you going to vote for in the upcoming election for the House of Representatives in your proportional representation bloc?

LDP 23.9
DPJ 40.4
NK 5.6
JCP 4.7
SDP 1.3
PNP 0.5
YP 1.8
RC ---
NPN 0.1
Other political parties 0.6
Undecided 16.3
N/A 4.7

Q: Which political party would you not like to see gain more seats. If any, pick as many as you like from among those listed below.

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LDP 27.8
DPJ 10.2
NK 16.0
JCP 11.2
SDP 5.9
PNP 1.5
RC 0.9
NPN 0.9
Other political parties 3.9
None in particular 40.8
N/A 6.7

Q: Are you going to vote in the upcoming election for the House of Representatives?

Yes, definitely (including early voting) 74.7
Yes, if possible 20.8
Probably not 2.4
No (abstain from voting) 1.4
N/A 0.7

Q: When comparing Prime Minister Aso and DPJ President Hatoyama, who do you think is more appropriate to be prime minister?

Prime Minister Aso 26.8
DPJ President Hatoyama 46.3
N/A 26.8

Q: When comparing the LDP and the DPJ, which party do you think is more competent to run the government?

LDP 44.6
DPJ 31.8
N/A 23.5

Q: What kind of government would you like to see after the upcoming election for the House of Representatives?

LDP-led coalition government 16.2
DPJ-led coalition government 27.3
LDP-DPJ grand coalition government 24.1
Government under new framework through political realignment 24.9
O/A ---
N/A 7.6

Polling methodology: The survey was conducted Aug. 18-20 across the nation on a computer-aided random digit dialing (RDD) basis. Households with one or more eligible voters totaled 1,811. Valid answers were obtained from 1,093 persons (59.7%).

(Note) In some cases, the total percentage does not add up to 100% due to rounding.

(6) Comparison of LDP, DPJ manifestos on bureaucratic reform, decentralization of power

YOMIURI (Page 3) (Excerpts)
August 25, 2009

Yuichi Suzuki, Shinya Yamada, political reporters

What is the picture of Japan's future being presented in the

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political parties' manifestos (campaign pledges) for the forthcoming House of Representatives election where the voters will be choosing an administration? The pledges of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) and the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) on the relationship between politicians and bureaucrats and that between the national and local governments, two issues which bear on the "shape of the nation," are examined here.

The administrative vice ministers' meeting, which has existed since the Meiji era, has traditionally been the body in charge of prior examination of matters to be taken up at the cabinet meetings.

The DPJ regards this vice ministers' meeting as the symbol of bureaucratic control and proposes to abolish it. The party would replace it with "ministers' committees" consisting of a small number of ministers to serve as the venue of coordination among ministries for important policies. Its manifesto also talks about creating a new "national strategy bureau" reporting directly to the prime minister. The outline of the budget will be drafted by the Prime Minister's Official Residence (Kantei) and will not be left in the hands of the Ministry of Finance.

The Kasumigaseki reform proposals of the DPJ seek to limit the role of bureaucrats in the process of formulation of and coordination for policies, and transform the "bureaucratic cabinet system" since the Meiji era into a "politician-led" system to conform to the

mainstream in the world.

Pitfalls of unified control

However, it is unclear to what extent the relationship between politicians and bureaucrats will change under the DPJ-proposed "politician-led" system.

The LDP administrations have followed the convention of government-proposed bills going through prior examination by the party's General Council and Policy Research Council under a dual system of policymaking shared by the cabinet and the LDP. Cabinet ministers tasked bureaucrats to coordinate with powerful party members and zoku giin (Diet members lobbying for special interests), and bureaucrats tended to protect the interests of their own ministries by joining hands with the zoku giin.

The DPJ proposes to deal with this by amending the National Government Organization Law and other legislation and to send some 100 ruling party Diet members to the ministries and the Kantei, in order to unify policymaking under the cabinet. It has declared that the party will be prohibited from interfering with policy decisions. However, according to a former Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport, and Tourism official, many think that "if Deputy President Ozawa and other powerful party officials do not join the cabinet, a dual structure of power is very likely."

Many are also concerned that "if the ruling parties are integrated too much with the government, checks and balances in the Diet and legislative functions will become lax."

Reinforcing cabinet functions

Meanwhile, the LDP has worked on Kasumigaseki reform since the "Hashimoto reforms" in the second half of the 1990s in order to reinforce the cabinet's functions. It has taken such steps as

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increasing the number of assistants to the prime minister, the creation of the Council on Economic and Fiscal Policy chaired by the prime minister, and the introduction of the system of senior vice ministers and parliamentary secretaries. Nevertheless, sectarian thinking endures in the ministries.

In its manifesto, the LDP pledges to set up a national strategy staff to assist the prime minister and realize the unified management of appointments of senior civil servants. Unified personnel management is meant to eliminate sectarianism.

Hideki Kato, a former Ministry of Finance bureaucrat and president of "Japan Initiative," a policy research institute, points out that "the reason why bureaucrats have come to hold power is because they have been responsible for the tedious work of policy coordination, such as negotiations and briefing stakeholders. If the politicians do the coordination themselves and take responsibility for the process, the bureaucrats will follow their leadership. The issue is rather the politicians' capability."

The definition of the role of the national and local governments is closely related to Kasumigaseki reform.

Since the Meiji era, Japan has concentrated power and revenues in Kasumigaseki for the uniformed administration of the country. This was effective in the process of modernization and postwar reconstruction, but the involvement of the national government in the minute details of the local governments' work has given rise to complaints that local governments are unable to conduct administration suitable to the local conditions at their own discretion. The need to regularly petition Kasumigaseki to ask for approval of projects is also a heavy burden on the local governments.

The DPJ advocates a shift from the system of concentration of power in the central government to a system of local autonomy. It proposes abolishing local offices of the central ministries work in principle and abolishing or reducing Tokyo's micro-regulation of local

governments' work through legislation after taking power.

The above have been long-time demands from the National Association of Governors. The DPJ claims that combined with its unique proposal to replace government subsidies with strict limits on usage with lump sum grants local governments can use freely. "Kasumigaseki can be reduced to half of its present size," said Koichiro Genba, chair of the Research Committee on Decentralization of Power.

However, more than two-thirds of government subsidies are used for social security and education. The LDP criticizes the DPJ's proposal saying, "Lump sum grants will not increase revenues that can be used freely."

The LDP's proposal for eliminating the concentration of power in the central government is the introduction of the doshu (regional) system, the centerpiece of its manifesto. It aims to reorganize the prefectures into about 10 regions by 2017.

LDP proponents of this system explain that "most of the national government's powers and revenues with regard to industrial development, building of social infrastructure, and so forth will be shifted to the states, and Kasumigaseki's role will be reduced to such areas as foreign policy, defense, and the judiciary." The

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Nippon Keidanren (Japan Business Federation) and the business sector support the doshu system, but a strategy for persuading the ministries to transfer powers and revenues in a bold fashion has not been spelled out.

(7) Flurry of unprecedented budget requests: Deadline for submission of requests on the 31st, but cabinet ministers busy campaigning for election

YOMIURI (Page 11) (Abridged)
August 25, 2009

The day of the Lower House election, in which the main focus is whether there will be a change in government, is drawing near. Bureaucrats at Kasumigaseki (government office district) are busily engaged in dealing with budget request guidelines for fiscal 2010, with the August 31 deadline for submissions close at hand. The budget compilation work is not making headway as in other years, because ministry officials are unable to find time to brief their ministers, who are busy with election campaigning. The Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) plans to recompile the budget once it takes the reins of government. Officials at various government offices are concerned that if there is power transfer, they would have to do it all over again.

Securing time for briefing to ministers

As Minister of Land, Infrastructure and Transport Kaneko is going on stumping tours for the Lower House election all over the country, it is difficult for ministry officials to secure time (for such a meeting) with him, complained Vice Minister Taniguchi. In his view, the only thing he can do is to visit the minister's constituency after his campaign activities are over.

The Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare (MHLW) plans to finish a briefing to the minister before the end of the week. However, a timetable for a ministerial meeting, where the ministry's views are to be unified, has yet to be set. There is a possibility of the MHLW minister being unable to attend the meeting. Adjustments of views with the ruling parties, which many government offices undergo every year, have not made headway sufficiently.

The Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) on the 20th released the specifics of its budget requests. However, the reality is, according to a senior official: "We released whatever was available. The real race is yet to come."

Possibility of budget compilation being put off until next year

At the start of the process of compiling a national budget, request

guidelines (ceilings) are set in late July. Government agencies then exchange views with relevant sections and the ruling parties, after which they submit funding requests to the Finance Minister by the end of August. The Finance Ministry then screens their requests. This work moves into high gear in September. A government plan is then adopted in late December.

However, DPJ Policy Research Council Chairman Naoshima criticized the budget request guidelines for fiscal 2010 as meaningless. The party is aiming to substantively recompile the budget, by newly setting up a national strategy bureau directly reporting to the prime minister.

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It is viewed that if the budget request guidelines, which the government has already adopted, are cancelled, there would be a substantial delay in the budget compilation work. The mechanism of the proposed national strategy bureau, which is viewed to be tasked with deciding on the total amount of the budget and budgetary frameworks for each government agency, has yet to be clarified. Some Finance Ministry officials have pointed out the possibility of the compilation of the budget being put off until the next year, with one official saying, "There is concern that a substantial delay in the launch of the budget compilation work may make it difficult to complete the work before the end of the year."

(8) Police send U.S. serviceperson's case to prosecutor; marine may become first serviceperson in prefecture to stand trial in a court case presided by citizen judges

Ryukyu Shimpo (Page 31) (Full)
August 25, 2009

On the 24th the Naha Police Department sent to the public prosecutor's office for robbery causing injury and possible violation of the Swords and Firearms Control Law the case of an 18-year-old marine private first class (a minor) from the Makiminato Service Area (Camp Kinser). The marine allegedly put a knife to the neck of a taxi driver, cutting him, and stole his cash box. If the Naha District Attorney indicts the marine, he will be the first U.S. serviceperson to stand trial in a court case presided by citizen judges in (Okinawa) Prefecture.

According to the Naha Police, the private first class made a full confession, and the knife, money box, and other evidence were confiscated during a house search. The prefectural police had announced on the 6th the marine had been named a suspect.

The private first class is now incarcerated in a prison at Camp Hansen and will be turned over to Japanese authorities after he is indicted.

The Naha Police reported that at 8:39 on the evening of the 1st the private first class put a knife against the neck of a taxi driver (58) while saying "money, money." He fled from the taxi with a bag and money box holding the driver's cash and taxi revenue. The driver suffered a cut requiring five days to heal.

The money box and bag contained about 60,000 yen and 100 U.S. dollars.

ROOS